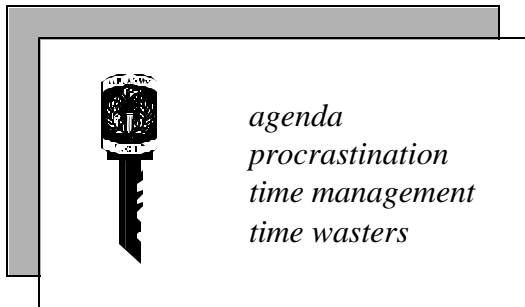


## LESSON 3: TIME MANAGEMENT



### INTRODUCTION

Think back to this morning. How was it for you? Did you get up on time? Did you have breakfast? Did you have time to do what you expected to do — or what your parents expected you to do? Now, let us go back to last evening. Did you finish your homework? Did you take care of your share of the household chores? Did you watch your favorite television program(s)?

Frustration creeps in when you do not manage time well. On a scale of one to ten (one being *poor use of time* and ten being *great use of time*), how well did you manage your time yesterday? If you can honestly answer nine or ten, give yourself an “A.” If you answered seven or below, then you need to organize your day better in order to gain control of your time and your life.

Every day we are given a precious gift — the gift of time. We get twenty-four hours of it. We each get the same amount, but how we choose to use this time makes all the difference. When you take responsibility for how you spend your time, by planning your day and building a schedule to achieve your goals, you are practicing **time management**.

This lesson will teach you how to plan your day, and how to execute your plan. Planning your day will help you target

academic and personal goals, manage the increasing demands on your time, reduce stress, increase successes, and achieve greater satisfaction and enjoyment of life.

### THE PERFECT DAY

Let us divide the day into five blocks of time: before school, school, after school, before bed, and bedtime.

#### BEFORE SCHOOL

Consider the morning as that part of the day from the time you wake up until the time you leave for school. What is a perfect morning?

- What time would you get up?
- How long would you need to take care of your personal hygiene, grooming, and dressing?
- How much time would you need to take care of your other responsibilities, like helping to get your younger sister or brother ready, feeding the pets, or taking out the trash?
- What other activities must you complete before school and how long do they take?

#### BEFORE BED

Let us back up for a moment. In order to have a perfect morning, you must definitely get some things accomplished in the evening, after dinner and before you go to bed on the preceding day.

- How much time should you spend doing homework and chores?
- How much time is left for talking on the phone or watching television?

- What is your nighttime ritual before going to bed? Do you choose your clothes for the next day, pack your book bag, or prepare your lunch? How long does all that take?
- What time do you need to go to bed in order to get your “forty winks” of sleep? For most of us, eight hours of sleep is almost essential.
- What else do you need to do after dinner and before bed? Planning a perfect evening sets the stage for a perfect tomorrow.

### *AFTER SCHOOL*

Let us back up some more. Consider what goes on after school? Do you participate in a club, in a sport, or in the band? Do you work after school?

Is there time before, during, or after practice or work to accomplish something meaningful? If you do not practice or work everyday, what would be the best use of your time after school and before dinner? This period can amount to between two to four hours, and it should include meaningful activities as well as leisure time and time to rest. If you take the school day and your sleeping time out of the equation, the time in your life that is within your control is the time before school, after school, and before bed.

### **CREATING A DAILY ACTIVITY MATRIX**

Before you can begin to manage your time effectively, you need to know how you currently spend your time. Completing a daily activity matrix can help you in this endeavor.

### *Daily Activity Matrix*

Activity	Minutes a Day	Days a Week
School		
School related extracurricular activities		
Playing sports (not school related)		
Homework and studying		
Watching TV		
Playing videogames		
Reading for pleasure		
Shopping		
Work		
Chores and family responsibilities		
Spending time with friends		
Spending time with family		
Church and all related activities		
Eating		
Sleeping		
Other:		

Look at the matrix. If you take the total time spent on these activities and subtract that from 1440 (the number of minutes in a day) you end up with the number of minutes you spend in unscheduled activities. Is some of this time wasted? Remember that time wasted can never be regained. There are many ways that people waste time each day. Some of the most common **time wasters** are:

- **Procrastination**, or putting something off that needs to be done. For example, you procrastinate writing the essays for your college application because it is burdensome.
- **Poor Organization**. If you spend every morning looking for your backpack before you catch the bus to school, you are poorly organized, and you are wasting time.

- Crisis Management, or spending a lot of time solving a large and immediate problem. For example, you forgot you had a math quiz today, so now you have to drop everything else and cram for your quiz. This is a time waster because if you had planned better, you would not have had a crisis in the first place.

Could your time be better spent elsewhere?

Now that you have thought about it, you are ready to organize your day on paper. You should always write down your plans, keeping in mind that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

## DAILY PLANNING AND GOALS

Think about what you want to accomplish in school this year, and what part of it is achievable within the next six weeks. Do you want to:

- Make the honor roll?
- Work toward earning an academic, military, or athletic scholarship?
- Write an article for the school newspaper?

A daily plan should be aligned with your short-term, and mid-term goals, which will, in turn, enable you to achieve your long-term goals. When you know that your daily activities are helping you achieve your goals, you will see that there is an increased meaning in the tasks you do every day and you will feel a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day, knowing that you are working toward the achievement of your goals. When you take responsibility for planning your daily activities, you are in control of your own destiny.

The first step toward creating a daily plan is to prioritize your daily tasks, assigning

a higher priority to those that are most important to you, and keeping in mind those short-term goals that will enable you to achieve your long-term goals. Prioritizing your daily tasks is very important because you can concentrate on scheduling those activities that are of the highest priority first. Items of a lesser priority can be scheduled around the high priority tasks as they fit into the day. You may find that you do not have time to schedule all of your tasks, but you can be assured that you are going to accomplish the highest priority ones.

The image shows two overlapping daily planner templates. The top template is titled "Daily Planner for Today's Date" and has three columns: "PRIORITY", "THINGS TO DO TODAY", and "DUE DATE". The bottom template is also titled "Daily Planner for Today's Date" and has two columns: "TIME" (with slots for 6 AM, 7 AM, 8 AM, 9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 12 PM, 1 PM, 2 PM, and 3 PM) and "TODAY'S SCHEDULE".

After you have prioritized all of your daily tasks, you are ready to create a schedule or **agenda** for the day. Remember to record the task with the highest priority first, and so on. Use this type of written schedule to serve as a reminder of specific events, due dates, responsibilities, and deadlines.

## THE BIG PICTURE

Planning one day at a time is like admiring a beautiful forest, one tree at a time. If the forest is your life, you may need to get an overview to see where the paths through the forest are leading. In the same way, you should plan in larger time frames to ensure

your days are leading you toward your goals. The daily plan takes you through twenty-four hours of life and keeps you active in the here and now. The weekly plan shows you how to balance your life. You will discover that 168 hours is enough time to work, practice, study, attend meetings, spend time with your family, and have fun with your friends, too.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8 AM					
9 AM					
10 AM					
11 AM					
NOON					
1 PM					
2 PM					
3 PM					
4 PM					
5 PM					
6 PM					
7 PM					
8 PM					
9 PM					
10 PM					
11 PM					
12 AM					

GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PERSONAL GOAL: 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
                               2) \_\_\_\_\_  
                               3) \_\_\_\_\_  
 LIFE GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_

The quarter or semester plans show you the big picture far in advance. You can plan your days and weeks better if you have developed a quarter or semester schedule. They display week by week when all of your tests, projects, mentoring activities, papers, science or math fairs, key social events, athletic or JROTC events, field trips, national test dates, family vacations, etc., are due or will occur. You will be able to determine which weeks are heavily scheduled. You can use the light weeks to start studying and preparing for the heavier weeks.

**SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Course & Page Number	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
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## PLAN YOUR WORK, WORK YOUR PLAN

The following tips will help you to more effectively know how to plan your work for a day, week, or longer (quarter or semester); thus, enabling you to do better at working your planning process.

- Make time every evening to review your day and plan your tomorrow.
- Re-evaluate your goals every week, and write short-term goals on your planning sheets. Stay committed to your goals.
- Prioritize your “To Do” list.
- Make a list of things you can accomplish in 15- and 30-minute blocks of time. For example, dusting or emptying the trash, reviewing class notes, learning new Spanish vocabulary (already written on index cards), reviewing mentoring activities, or learning how to work one new math problem. Be ready to fill the in-between times with something useful.

- Use a timer to move you along during tight periods, like mornings before school.
- Schedule something fun everyday. Do your work first and reward yourself with something fun.
- Record your favorite television programs and watch them during planned leisure times.
- Be flexible; shift things around when necessary. Do not get discouraged if you are thrown off schedule by unavoidable circumstances.
- As you finish a task, cross it off your “things to do” list. Plus, add anything you did that was not on the list, then cross it off. Adding and crossing tasks off your list is not only a way of keeping track of what you have accomplished but also a way of acknowledging your accomplishment.
- Enjoy the sense of satisfaction that comes from accomplishing something, no matter how small, and taking definite steps toward your goals.

## CONCLUSION

Few people ever plan to fail, but many people fail to plan. Time is the great equalizer; we all get the same amount everyday. Whether it is used or abused often determines who rises to greatness and who falls to failure. Daily, weekly, and long-term (quarter or semester) planning puts you in charge of your life. Setting specific goals will give you a track to run on and a course to follow. You will know what it is you want, and you will “go for it!”

The cadet who routinely plans, reviews the plan, and adjusts it to the “ups” and “downs” of life will find this planning process very rewarding. Planning will help you to manage life’s increasing demands while targeting academic and personal goals. Daily triumphs, no matter how small, will translate into goal achievements, generating greater satisfaction and enjoyment of life.